

REMARKS

Request for Reconsideration

Applicants have carefully considered the matters raised by the Examiner in the outstanding Office Action but remain of the opinion that patentable subject matter is present.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Examiner's position based on the above amendments to the Specification, Claims, Drawings and the following remarks.

Claims Status

Claims 33-44 are pending in this Application.

Claims 33, 34, 36, 39, 40, and 42 have been amended herein to address the 112 rejections and the claim objections put forward by the Examiner.

Respectfully, no new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

Drawing Objections

The Examiner objected to Figure 3 because the same reference character, "2", was used to designate the fastening system in Figures 2 and 3. As the Examiner recognized, there is some variation between the fastening system shown in Figures 2 and 3 and, thus, he required the use of a different character for the fastening system between the two Figures. Figure 3 has been amended herein to refer to the fastening system as "2'". The Specification on page 11 (Substitute Specification filed December 10, 2004) has been amended to refer to the fastening system in Figure 3 as "2'".

The drawings had further been objected to because reference character "1" had been used to designate the floor system in Figure 1 as well as Figures 6-13. Figures 6-9 and 13 had been amended herein to remove reference character 1.

Figure 6 had been objected to because panel 41 was shown in a cutaway manner but had not been crosshatched appropriately. Substitute Figure 6, as presented herein, has been crosshatched.

Respectfully, the Substitute Drawings, with the amendments as noted above, are acceptable and fully respond to the Examiner's objections to the drawings.

Specification Objections

The Examiner objected to the May 7, 2007 amendment to page 9, seventh paragraph. It is understood that this amendment has not been entered.

Applicants do not propose any arguments to this refusal to enter the amendment, however, do note that the panels are four sided panels having four narrow edges. Furthermore, Applicants submit that whether the panels are rectangular or square is irrelevant. The Specification is clearly not limited to a rectangular panel versus a square panel. The preferred embodiment is clearly rectangular panels, but the claims as filed are not so limited. In any event, Applicants do not attempt, at this time, to amend page 9, seventh paragraph.

The Examiner appears to have objected to Figure 13 in the description of Figure 13 as contained in the Substitute Specification filed on December 10, 2004. It is submitted

that Figure 13 is fully supported by the Specification as is the description on page 18 of the Substitute Specification as filed on December 10, 2004. The attached Figure 13 identifies the short sides of the panel as having profiles 4A and 4B and the long sides of the panel having profiles 42 and 43. It is submitted that this arrangement for the panel is clearly supported in the Specification, see the paragraph starting at the bottom 5 and going over the third paragraph on page 6. In those paragraphs, it clearly describes that the long side of the panel has the modified tongue and groove arrangement which is shown in Figures 6-12 while the short side has the hook elements as shown in Figs. 1-5, see, specifically, the third paragraph on page 6, fourth line, where it is recommended that the hook elements are used on the short side. It is submitted that Figure 13 simply shows a panel having the modified tongue and groove of Figures 6-12 and the hook system of Figures 1-5.1.

The Specification had been objected to for using the term "long narrow sides" and "short narrow sides". The Examiner noted that this is an oxymoron and suggested using conventional terms such as "long side" and "short side". Such a suggestion is appreciated and has been adopted

herein. It will be noted that the term "narrow" was used with the intent of referring to the "height" or thickness of the panel. In any event, the Specification has been amended to delete "narrow" from each of these terms.

Claim Objections

The claims had been objected to and the Examiner had suggested specifying which panel, which hook and which leg is used in the claims. The claims have been amended herein to be consistent.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner noted that Claims 33-44 were allowable if amended to overcome the 112 Rejections. Such acknowledgement is appreciated and it is deemed that the amendments made herein do make the claims definite.

Request for Two Month Extension of Time

Applicants hereby petition for two-month extension of time and pay the appropriate petition fees herewith.

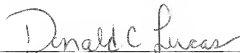
Should any additional fees or extensions of time be necessary in order to maintain the Application in pending condition, appropriate requests are hereby made and authorization is given to debit account #02-2275.

In view of the foregoing and the enclosed, it is respectfully submitted that the Application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attached: Five Replacement Sheets of Figures 3, 6, 7, 8 & 9, and 13.